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GAME 1 | HAWAII VS. NORTHERN COLORADO

Pilares realizes 'dream' on Aloha turf



Hawaii's Pilares scores the first touchdown of the season for Hawaii's first team, taking a Colt Brennan pass 15 yards against Northern Colorado.

Ex-Damien star scores Hawaii's first TD of season on first touch

BY DAYTON MORIMAGA

Two years ago, Koahe Pilares was sitting in the stands at Aloha Stadium, cheering on the University of Hawaii football team. Last night, he scored a touchdown the first time he touched the ball in a Warriors uniform.

Pilares, a 2006 graduate from Damien Memorial School, originally committed to play for Aloha before changing his mind to return home to play for the Warriors.

"It's a dream come true," Pilares said. "I just wanted all the fans to see me play."

Hawthorne happy Hawaii wide receiver C.J. Hawthorne also scored his first collegiate touchdown last night.

Hawthorne, who played defensive back last season, caught a 30-yard touchdown from Brennan in the first quarter.

"I just feel blessed that I got a chance to go back to school," he said. "After that, I felt comfortable."

Junior David Farmer — who is considered the best blocker among the running backs — started last night's game. But Pilares and fellow newcomer Leon Wright Jackson shared duties with the first team in the first half.

"I think we all can do different things, so we all can play," Pilares said. "I think we did the job as a unit tonight."

Sixty members of the team and coaches took in a UH practice this week. Earlier this summer, UH assistants Dan Morrison and Jeff Riebelhoff were guest coaches in Japan.

UH hopes to someday recruit a player from Japan.

Notes: Michael Washington's 40-yard punt return in the first quarter is the longest in UH history. Gerald Green took the record with an 80-yard return in 1971.

Notes: Ryan Gotoz Malina had the receivers with nine receptions for 130 yards and a touchdown. Dorene Ben added seven catches for 54 yards and a touchdown, and Jason Rivers contributed five receptions for 101 yards and one touchdown.

Notes: Senior receiver Tim Peoples led the team's receiving effort. Danny Kishine led the nation in punting during the game. The UH receiving staff performed during the game and set a school record for 101 yards and one touchdown.

Notes: Coach Dan Morrison and Coach Jeff Riebelhoff were guest coaches with UH last night.

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Warriors

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five receptions for 101 yards and a touchdown. "It becomes like a habit."

It was a habit that UNC's predictable defense could not break. The Bears tried to come blitz, attacking with their linebackers, and then retreated into a two-deep zone, in which the safeties retreated into a prevent defense.

"We knew what coverage they were in," Brennan said. "When we found a hole, we'd hit it. When they'd ask their safeties a kind of look for that, then we'd do the opposite."

The UH receivers ran corner and down-and-out routes to stretch the defense. Then they would cut inside on screens, slants and posts.

"There were holes," Brennan said. "There are always going to be holes. We were able to know where the holes were and capitalize."

Brennan was ready since stepping off the team bus. Of his six scoring passes, five were to different receivers.

His 39 first-quarter completions were a school record. So, too, were his 14 first-half completions.

He also led his buddy, former Southern California quarterback Matt Lattari, for multiple plays with his 19th career touchdown pass.

Lattari and Brennan were teammates at Mater Dei High School. Brennan's first scoring pass of the season was to Pilares, who snatched into the left flat to catch a six pass.

"I looked around, and nobody was there," Pilares said of his 15-yard scoring play that put Hawaii on the Warriors' first possession. Brennan and Rivers then collaborated on a 30-yard touchdown pass, a play that was made possible when Pilares blocked a blitzer.

"The guy had a five-foot shot at Colt Brennan," he was glad to get a piece of him.

Brennan also threw scoring passes of 5 and 2 yards to left halfback Dayton Ben, and to Hawthorne, who made a 49-yard punt grab at the end zone's doorstep.

"Colt made it possible," Hawthorne said. "He kept talking to me. He's been helping me feel comfortable in the offense."

By the time the Warriors were leading 6-0 early in the second quarter, "and the way the defense was playing," Brennan said, "the game was in pretty good hands."

It was then that head coach Jose Jones instructed Brennan



Hawaii's quarterback Colt Brennan was breaking the Northern Colorado defense by scattering away from pressure.

to work on specific plays. During one sequence in the second quarter, the Warriors ran the two-minute offense.

"The two practices," Brennan said, "are game time."

For the Warriors' defense, the game served as a final examination. Michigan, who returned after an eight-year hiatus, implemented a 4-3 base scheme that emphasized speed, blitzes and forceful. Michigan implemented the football team running back David Woods. On the second, Woods misplayed a handoff to the blocking schemes on fumble and interception return.

"We want to help the offense by getting the ball," weak-side linebacker Adam Leonard.

The Bears' first two possessions ended with four fumbles. On the first, safety Kory Adams and Leonard knocked free the football from running back David Woods. On the second, Woods misplayed a handoff to the blocking schemes on fumble and interception return.

"We had a couple of mishaps," Brennan said. "We handled the ball a little bit, and turned the ball over, which you can't have in the game. That's what we struggle with. We handle them, and we're probably still in the game."

Leonard said. "We're trying to get the ball down the middle. We aren't having one of those. We played hard, no one's fault."

The Bears were held to 193 yards, an average of 29 yards per play.

"We had so many three-and-outs," Leonard said. "We're trying to make our mark. We're trying to be the team for the season. We want to take this game as a platform and try to get better. As long as we're on the field, we could stop them. If we do what we're supposed to do, we can stop anybody."

That confidence extended to the special teams. Washington

We have to eliminate the mental mistakes."

The Bears tried to shorten the game with running plays. But, because they could not use one offensive end, Amari Pace and Earl Hunt, the Bears tried to run into the heart of the UH defense. Several times, they missed the right end to serve as the lead blocker for Woods.

"There wasn't much focus in that," defensive line coach Jeff Riebelhoff said. "The defensive line coaches do such a good job of holding the point."

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was signed.

One could blame part of this on Michigan head coach Lloyd Carr. Except that would constitute giving an other everything Wolverines fans are looking for.

Michigan State's 14-32 standing against UH was not surprising. Those two games were a game with UH in Ann Arbor, Mich., that set in motion two disasters: this one and

what took place at a disbelieving Big House.

Carr wanted an eighth home game and 12th game overall but he wanted no part of the Warriors for either. "He wouldn't play us," UH athletic director Herman Frazer confirmed. "It would have been the opposite."

What Carr got in their place was a mauling of his world while UH free safety Kory Adams, Mich., that set in motion two disasters: this one and

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kickoff return in the fourth. Finally, after Greg Salar's 20-yard touchdown pass from Louie Fankhauser in the fourth quarter and 260 total yards, they reached. "Good practice for next week's Army physical

fitness tests," said Army Sgt. Amanda Biles.

At this rate and with this schedule — while the Warriors worked on their two-minute drill and on some game-time work before next week's West-ern Athletic Conference opener.

Pick your starting point in this case: Two first-quarter Bears turnovers? A 28-point UH first quarter? We'll take April 1, 2007 — and all-too-appropriate time as it turns out — which was when the contract

was signed.

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